

## Stand Out | Philippians 3:17-21

“The Time is Now.” You’ve heard it before I’m sure. Whether it be “the time” to join a certain sports team, or to be a part of a certain organization, or even to make an important decision that could make a significant impact in your life, the phrase “The Time is Now” has been around for quite a while. It has been around so much and used so often, however, that in my opinion, it’s lost a lot of its meaning. People may say, “Well I was told that ‘the time was now’ last year and here I am again with another opportunity to be a part of something I was offered in the past, so that phrase doesn’t apply to me.” If you’re honest with yourself, that person may have been you at some point, or maybe still is.

The thing about time is this: **it is the most precious gift that is never guaranteed.** Take a second and think about that.

During a time such as this, where each and every day is another unknown, time is even more precious than ever, especially for us as followers of Christ. Many people are living in fear, doubt, and uncertainty in what to do, how to live, and who/what to trust. Some of us might feel some of these “symptoms” as well, but as followers of Christ, we have a truth and a hope that many people **do not have**: Jesus.

That seems obvious, right? Of course we have Jesus, tell me something I don’t know! But, that’s actually all you need to know...and that’s what we need to be showing the world right now.

Take a second and **Read Philippians 3:17-21.**

What Paul is telling the Church at Philippi here is tragic. He urges the believers in which he is writing to continue living out their faith and building each other up in Christ, because there are so many people who were “enemies” of the cross of Christ. What Paul means by “enemy” here is that they simply did not know and have a relationship with Jesus, therefore they were living life with a dependency on the things of this world! And Paul was deeply saddened by this:

*“For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again **even with tears**, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.” (v. 18)*

However, Paul then reminds us not only of the hope that we as Christians have, but of the hope that was made available to everyone through Jesus' death on the cross. Since we have surrendered our lives to Christ and places our hope and trust in Him, we are children of God and citizens of Heaven. Fear has no hold on us! We are no bound by the chains of doubt! We do not have to worry about tomorrow, or next week, or next year because God has been there, He has overcome it, and He is paving a way for us to walk faithfully in according to His will. And the best part is, He will never leave us. He goes before us, behind us, and beside us. His Spirit is always surrounding us and living within us. In fact, the same power that rose Jesus from the grave that defeated death once and for all and claimed victory over the enemy lives in us!!! (Ephesians 1:18-20) Therefore, in every situation of fear, anxiety, worry, uncertainty, doubt, when you travel through the valley of the unknown, you have power through Christ to overcome it and find peace.

But, not only can we be overcomers, but it is our mission as followers of Christ to share this hope with others who do not have it – especially during a time like this. The world cannot give people hope like our God can. The world is searching for a physical cure to defeat an invisible enemy, and while there is a cure out there that we have yet, but will eventually discover, the cure that this world needs, not only for the here and now, but for eternity is the hope that we have in Christ. We have the cure.

So, my challenge to you students, is to use this time of uncertainty to help make certain the hope we have in Jesus. Even though we have to be physically distant, we need to be even more socially and, most importantly, spiritually connected together. We need to stand out and let the light of Christ shine in and through us.

The world needs hope. The world needs peace. The world needs a cure. The world needs Jesus.

**The Time to Be the Hands and Feet of Jesus...is now.**

**RIGHT NOW...**

- Call or text a friend (maybe your ONE) and share an encouraging word.
- Use social media to share your favorite verse, favorite worship song, or encouraging word so that those following you can see the hope you have in Jesus.
- Set up a time to meet with your DGroup or group of friends that are followers of Christ as well to encourage one another to dig deeper into God's word and lean more into the Spirit.